

rates gathered from practically all the countries of Europe, India, America and Japan. In all countries for which figures are available there is a shrinkage in the birth-rate and more particularly in the corrected growth rate of the population. As is well known, the latter figure is a negative one for practically all western Europe. In western Europe, North America and more civilized countries generally, the fall in the birth-rate is catastrophic, but even in more primitive countries it has already made its appearance. Burgdörfer provides a striking diagram comparing the 1933 and 1934 birth-rates against those of 1932, which show an acceleration of the process. Germany alone shows a substantial increase of 20 per cent. on the 1932 rate in 1934. Countries now in process of "civilization," such as Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland, show the most marked recent decrease. England, France and Scandinavian countries show a lesser fall, but are already at a much lower level. The majority of the experts seem to be of the opinion that the causes are in the first place social, psychological and maybe political, and that economic factors play a secondary part. In other words, people do not have children, not because they cannot afford them, but because it is no longer the fashion, because children interfere with social amenities, etc. The experts of different countries regard the fall with varied feelings. Sir Charles Close, for instance, with complacency in the case of England. He says: "There is no simple solution for most of our difficulties, but we can aim at a step-by-step improvement of our social conditions, and this kind of policy is being carried on in Britain. In the future, if we plan properly, we may hope to have in our island a somewhat smaller population, living healthier and longer lives, working shorter hours, drawn from healthy stocks. If we aim at these things, we shall surely, one day, attain them."

The reviewer is not able to share Sir Charles Close's optimism, nor his enthusiasm for a smaller and older population. Sir Charles Close admits the disturbing fact of a well-marked and adverse differential fertility,

but expects that in this way we shall be able to achieve a population "drawn from healthy stocks." Unfortunately no contributor to the Congress is able to draw a line beyond which changes in age distribution and size of population are not likely to go. There is no natural equilibrium point. A certain degree of stability has been attained in France, but only with the aid of vigorous positive measures. In the city of Vienna one may see a further stage. Here over 70 per cent. of the marriages of 1919 to 1923 have been childless or with only one child. The process is in fact capable of leading to the complete extinction of the group affected. If the tendency is to be resisted, vigorous counter-measures are required, and that these do have an effect is shown by the example of Germany. No single measure is likely to have much effect; the problem should be attacked from all sides. The fall in the birth-rate seems to spread from the higher to the lower classes and from the town to the country. Any reversal of the process would probably take place in the same direction, which would of course also tend to correct the different fertility. An increase of birth-rate based on social conscience and a sound attitude towards parenthood would be of the highest eugenic value.

ELIOT SLATER.

**Myrdal, Alva, and Myrdal, Gunnar.**  
*Kris i Befolkningsfrågan (Crisis in the Population Question).* Stockholm, 1935. Albert Bonnier. Pp. 403. Price 3.50 Swedish Crowns.

THIS book has caused a great sensation in Sweden. It has become the starting point of a lively discussion in the press and—if I am correctly informed—of legislative measures also. The authors are among the few persons who combine a thorough understanding of to-day's urgent population problems with a genuine feeling for democracy and social reform. In *Crisis in the Population Question* they argue clearly and with a commendable lack of cheap moralizing that the decline in the birth-rate is the

inevitable result of the conditions of labour, nutrition, and housing to which the working classes are subjected even in rich countries like Sweden. The threat of depopulation cannot be averted by laws against birth control, but only by bold economic measures. First among these, they believe, would be a great extension of national production, followed by a corresponding increase in real wages, and adequate safeguards against unemployment. Such a policy alone, however, would not be enough. Society must be ready to take upon itself much of the expense and responsibility for the upbringing of the new generation, which are now almost exclusively shouldered by the individual couples. This can be accomplished either by family endowments or by some insurance system, but preferably by public welfare agencies directly serving the children, by crèches, kindergartens, free education, summer camps, school meals, dispensaries, and similar services. But some way or other of shifting the burden of parenthood to the community must be found, or the Swedish nation will perish.

As the net reproduction rate in England is about the same as in Sweden—in the neighbourhood of 0.7—it would be an excellent thing if this work were made accessible in a translation to the English-speaking public.

C. TIETZE.

## ECONOMICS

**Clark, Colin.** *National Income and Outlay.* London, 1937. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. Pp. 304. Price 12s. 6d.

THIS is an excellent work, full of material and of great interest to the economist and the general reader. It is not easy, however, in the present state of our knowledge, to trace a direct bearing between eugenics and economics. When we say, for instance, that family limitation is practised more by the rich than the poor, we do not mean that there is a negative correlation between income and size of the family. One would expect to find the dividing line coming between the skilled and the unskilled worker and tending to

travel downward. Intelligence, whether selfish or unselfish, and religion seem more important factors in this matter than economics. These points await elucidation by the Population Investigation Committee, of which the author is a member. It is very gratifying that the spheres of the eugenic and economist are constantly approaching.

Readers of the *EUGENICS REVIEW* will naturally turn with most interest to the second chapter, which deals very clearly with the question of a declining population. The writer points out that with a declining number of young people, we may expect a remarkable rise in women's wages during the next few years. But it may be pointed out that some of the results of a declining population are already apparent. Manufacturers of baby foods felt a slump some years ago; the labour exchanges have now great difficulty in supplying the juvenile female labour required. No doubt increased trade activity will have aggravated that lack. A remarkable rise in women's wages might result in a lessening desire for matrimony which might aggravate still further the fall in population. As against this, the inventive power of the engineer has never failed to provide the producer with automatic machinery when costs of labour have risen sufficiently to make its use economic. So the ultimate equilibrium results in fewer people being employed at a higher rate, the constant trend in production.

Another point which may have a eugenic bearing is noted by the author. He states that the lower paid now enjoy "a doubling of their (still slender) chance of promotion to the ranks of the middle classes." Does this necessarily affect the size of the families of those so promoted? Here again the Population Investigation Committee may help us.

The tenth chapter gives a full account of the first inquiry into the national income made by Gregory King in the year 1696. This was very well carried out. King estimated the then population at 5,500,000. He, also, gives the number of "Heads per family" for the twenty-seven classes into which he divides the population. Of course